State in northeast USA, in the mid-Atlantic region, bordered by the Canadian states of Ontario and Québec to the north, by Lake Ontario and Lake Erie to the northwest and west, and by Pennsylvania to the west and south; the east is bordered by Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont; in the southeast it faces New Jersey across the lower Hudson River; Long Island extends east from New York Bay into the Atlantic Ocean, with Connecticut lying to the north across the Long Island Sound; area 122,284 sq km/47,214 sq mi; population (2010) 19,378,102; capital Albany. New York is named after England's Duke of York, and the state's nickname is a tribute to its vast wealth and wide range of resources. Physically, the state is varied, with many mountain ranges, including the Adirondacks, Catskills, and Taconic, and many lakes and rivers, including the Niagara River which flows into Niagara Falls. Service industries, retail and wholesale trade, and tourism are important to New York's economy. Manufacturing products include chemicals, food products, and electrical equipment. Agriculturally, the dairy industry is important, and poultry, fruit, and vegetables are leading products. The largest city is New York; other major cities and urban areas include Buffalo, Rochester, Yonkers, Syracuse, New Rochelle, Schenectady, Utica, and the New York City-northeastern New Jersey area east of Long Island and north along the Hudson Valley. The Algonquian and the Iroquoian peoples were the earliest inhabitants of the New York region. The area was explored by the French, English, and Dutch, with the first permanent settlement at Albany. New York City's harbour became the focus of the Thirteen Colonies and saw some fighting during the American Revolution. The harbour later became a gateway for many European immigrants; Ellis Island, once the main immigration reception centre in the USA, and Liberty Island, where the Statue of Liberty is situated, both lie in the harbour. After the American Civil War the state became an industrial giant. New York joined the Union in 1788 as the 11th state.

Physical New York can be divided into eight different land regions: the Atlantic Coastal Plain; the New England Upland; the Piedmont Plateau; the Ridge and Valley region; the Appalachian Plateaux; the Adirondacks; the St Lawrence Valley province; and the Central Lowland.

The moraine-and-sand Long Island and Staten Island form part of New York's Coastal Plain region. The New England Upland divides into the seaboard lowland section, in which the hard bedrock of Manhattan island and the Hudson highlands are situated; and the Taconic section, where the highlands of the Taconic Range are situated. The dominant feature of the Piedmont Plateau in New York State is the Palisades, a sheer, rocky cliff-face on the western edge of the Hudson River along the New Jersey shore. New York's Ridge and Valley region is narrowly confined to the Hudson River corridor and valley.

The largest land region in New York State is the rugged, glaciated Appalachian Plateau, rising to the Catskill Mountains near Albany, including a series of steep limestone escarpments called the Helderbergs and a series of glacial-created lakes called the Finger Lakes. In this region, south of Cayuga Lake, the impressive Taughannock Falls have a higher elevation than Niagara Falls, at 215 ft/66 m. The Mohawk River valley separates the rest of the Appalachian Plateau from the Adirondack Mountains in northeastern New York State. The Adirondack province is an area of 26,000 sq km/10,000 sq mi of rugged, heavily forested, granite highlands, including Mount Marcy, at 1,629 m/5,344 ft the highest point in New York State. The St Lawrence river valley to the north and the Lake Champlain valley to the east...
bound this region. In the St Lawrence River, where it leaves Lake Ontario, are the Thousand Islands.
West of this region and running south of Lake Ontario and east of Lake Erie is a long plain, the Eastern
Lake section of New York's central lowland, featuring many small hills, known as drumlins, between
Syracuse and Rochester.

New York State has many rivers and thousands of natural lakes. The most important rivers are the St
Lawrence, Hudson, Mohawk, Genesee, Susquehanna, Allegheny, and Delaware rivers. The Niagara River
forms the Niagara Falls, north of the city of Buffalo.

New York's natural lakes number in the thousands. The western borders of the state are formed by
two of the USA's Great Lakes – Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Oneida Lake northeast of Syracuse is the
state's largest lake, at 210 sq km/80 sq mi; the larger and deeper Lake Champlain lies on the boundary
between New York and Vermont. Other major lakes include Lake George, Lake Placid, Chautauqua
Lake, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake, and, in the Finger Lakes region, Cayuga Lake and Seneca Lake. The
largest reservoirs in New York are Great Sacandaga Lake and the Allegheny, Ashokan, Pepacton, and
Cannonsville reservoirs.

New York has a varied climate, according to elevation and proximity to lakes or the coast, but in general
experiences cold winters with snow in the uplands and warm summers cooled by lake winds. The plains
of the Eastern Lake section, from Buffalo east to the Adirondacks, are subject to sudden blizzards,
known to have piled up as much as 2 m/7 ft of snow in a matter of days. The Tug Hill Upland, an
extension of the Appalachian Plateau on the far western edge of the Adirondacks, receives more snow
per year than any other part of the USA east of the Rocky Mountains.

New York is a heavily forested state and its trees include white pine, spruce, hemlock, maple, beech,
yellow birch, hickory, and several species of oak. Among the ferns and sedges of the forest floors are
flowers including gentians, violets, trillium, and trout lily, and field flowers such as goldenrod, thistle, and
aster. Wildlife is generally limited to smaller mammals, including beaver, fox, weasel, marten, porcupine,
raccoon, and chipmunk; but some black bear are found in mountain areas and moose are often seen in
the northeast. White-tailed deer are numerous in the state and hunting them is encouraged as a way to
manage populations. New York is home to several rare snakes and 18 different kinds of salamander.
Game birds and songbirds are common and range from grouse, turkey, and many different kinds of
duck, heron, and bittern, to warblers, hummingbirds, blue jays, and the state bird, the bluebird. Many
different kinds of rarer hawks, kestrel, and falcon are found in the state and the golden eagle and
osprey are protected species.

Freshwater fish in New York State are plentiful and range from catfish, brown, black, and yellow
bullhead, northern pike, yellow perch, walleye, smallmouth and largemouth bass, black crappie, different
kinds of salmon including coho, chinook, and Atlantic (landlocked), brook, lake, brown, and rainbow trout,
bass, and even carp, goldfish, quillback, bowfin, and American eel. Unusual smaller fish include
mudminnow, silverside, brook lamprey, pirate perch, and brook stickleback. There are 14 species of
minnow and prey fish include alewife, rainbow smelt, slimy sculpin, and gizzard shad. Marine fishing is
popular off Long Island and species include Atlantic cod, winter flounder, mackerel, and bluefish, summer
flounder and Spanish mackerel. Harp and grey seals are found in coastal waters as well as different
kinds of dolphin and porpoise. Endangered species such as sperm, humpback, and right whales are also
sometimes seen in coastal waters.

**Features** New York City is the most famous feature of New York State, but the rest of the state is
rich in historic sites and landmarks, including old breweries, preserved mills, covered bridges, windmills, lighthouses, and many historic mansions and monuments. There are also local history museums throughout the state, with collections of American Indian and colonial artefacts, agricultural tools, art, and other material of historical and cultural interest.

Important museums include the New York State Museum in Albany, the oldest and largest state museum in the USA, which features exhibitions on metropolitan New York, wilderness areas, and American Indians; the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake, with collections of artefacts, art, and photography; the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton; the Irish-American Heritage Museum in New Durham; the Milton J Rebenstein Museum of Science and Technology in Syracuse; the Buffalo Museum of Science; the Chapman Historical Museum in Glen Falls; the Zadock Pratt Museum in Prattsville, with artefacts and archives relating to the tanning industry; the Sharon Historical Society Museum in Sharon Springs, with original 19th-century photos and memorabilia from the spa town's golden age; the Upstate New York Italian Cultural Center and Museum in Utica; the FASNY Museum of Fire Fighting in Hudson, the oldest of its kind; the Thomas Paine Cottage Museum in New Rochelle; and the world's largest museum of photography, in George Eastman House (home of the founder of Eastman Kodak Company) in Rochester.

There are several American Indian sites in New York State. On Long Island at Montauk there is an important Indian burial ground. In central New York the Mohawk-Caughnawaga Museum and the Kateri Tekakwitha Memorial Shrine in Fonda contain an excavated American Indian village. Ganodagan State Historic Site in Victor in the Finger Lakes is the preserved site of a Seneca village. Squaw Island on Canadagua Lake is the spot where many Seneca women and children hid from General John Sullivan's military campaign against the Indians in 1779. The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) is in Manhattan, New York City, and features American Indian art and culture, with over a million artefacts. Other major American Indian museums in New York State include Terwilliger Historical Museum in Waterloo, with an 1870s–1920s American Indian longhouse; Southold Indian Museum on Long Island, with a large Algonquin pottery collection; Noteworthy Indian Museum in Amsterdam, a museum of American Indian history focusing on the Mohawk; the Yager Museum in Oneonta, featuring American Indian anthropology and a fine art collection; and the Fort William Henry Museum in Lake George, which focuses on the period of the French and Indian War (Fort William inspired the James Fenimore Cooper classic The Last of the Mohicans).

Although largely suburban, Long Island is famous for its beaches, vineyards, and New England-style villages and mansions. The Sagamore Hill National Historic Site in Oyster Bay was home to President Theodore Roosevelt 1885–1919. Many sites associated with F Scott Fitzgerald's novel The Great Gatsby are found on the North Shore Gold Coast, and the American Merchant Marine Museum is situated here at King's Point. Sea Cliff, Northport, and Stony Brook are historic villages. Cold Spring Harbor is home to a whaling museum and aquarium. The Walt Whitman Birthplace State Historic Site is in Huntington Station, where the poet lived as a child. The South Shore of Long Island is famous for Bay Houses, cottages perched on platforms surrounded by marsh or water, dating from the time when the island's farmers hired men to row out to remote marshlands in search of hay for their animals. The South Fork of Long Island, often referred to as the Hamptons, is a favourite vacation resort for affluent New Yorkers. Old Halsey House is the oldest wooden-frame house in New York State, dating from 1648, and is situated in Southampton.

The Hudson Valley is one of the most scenic parts of the northeast of the USA, famously celebrated in
the Hudson River School of landscape painting and architecture. The old Appalachian Trail intersects both Orange and Putnam counties in the Hudson River area. There are several Dutch colonial sites in the region but it is better known for Revolutionary-era sites and its Great River estates, or mansions, dating from the 1680s and later. The most famous of these are the Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site in Yonkers, built in 1682; Washington Irving's home, Sunnyside, and the Rockefeller estate, Pocantico Hills, both in Tarrytown; Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson; the summer home of Samuel Morse (inventor of the Morse code), 'Locust Grove', in Poughkeepsie; the homes of President Franklin D Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt, the Roosevelt Estates, in Hyde Park; the Vanderbilt Mansion in Hyde Park; and Mills Mansion in Staatsburg, featured in Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth.

The first major reservoir in New York State, providing New York City with one of the leading water systems in the world, is at Lake Croton in Ossining, and the Old Croton Aqueduct is now a state park. New Croton Dam is a major feature of the area. At New Rochelle, the Thomas Paine Monument (1899), the postcolonial Paine Cottage (now a museum), and the Paine Memorial House (1925) commemorate the Revolutionary author, who lived nearby from 1804 to 1806. Edward Hopper House is in Nyack. The Van Wyck Homestead near Beacon dates from 1732 and is thought to have been the inspiration for James Fenimore Cooper's The Spy. The town of Hudson has a number of historic features, including the Hudson-Athens Lighthouse (1874) and Rip Van Winkle Bridge (1935). In nearby Kinderhook is the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, marking the birthplace and estate of the eighth president of the USA. In the Chathams, east of Kinderhook, there is a Shaker Museum and library. Mount Lebanon Shaker Village is in New Lebanon. Poughkeepsie has a colonial and Revolutionary-period historic district and the Poughkeepsie Post Office is a National Historic Landmark. Vassar College (opened in 1865), one of the USA's foremost female educational establishments, is situated in Poughkeepsie.

There are many Revolutionary sites in the Hudson Valley. The town of Tappan is home to DeWint House, where George Washington entrusted West Point to Benedict Arnold; and Mabie House, where English army officer John André was imprisoned after his capture in Tarrytown, before being hung there in 1780. The André Monument marks the site of his execution. Stony Point Battlefield Reservation in Stony Point marks the capture of a strongly fortified British post by American troops, led by General 'Mad' Anthony Wayne, in 1779. The oldest lighthouse on the Hudson River, built in 1826, is located here. At West Point, Constitution Island was strategically important during the Revolution and remains accessible only by boat. George Washington's headquarters in Newburgh were located in a farmhouse and it was from here that he ordered a victorious end to the American Revolution. New Windsor Cantonment was the location of the final encampment of Washington's army during the Revolution.

North of the Hudson Valley, in central New York State, is the state capital. Albany has retained a strongly Dutch character and is the oldest city in New York State, and one of the oldest in the USA. The city has an impressive state capitol building, constructed 1871–99. St Peter's Church (1859) is the oldest Episcopal Church north of New York City. Just outside Albany is the USA's first Shaker settlement, featuring an 1848 meeting house.

In St Johnsville there is a Dutch fur-trading post dating from 1750, Fort Klock. In the Schoharie Valley, the spa town of Sharon Springs was a popular resort in the 1920s, and its grand baths are a National Historic Landmark. In Rome, a reconstructed version of the Revolutionary-era Fort Stanwix dominates the downtown area. Erie Canal Village is a recreated 19th-century village featuring a mule-drawn packet and a boat ride on a section of the historic Erie Canal. Chittenango is the birthplace of L Frank Baum, author of The Wizard of Oz.
In the Adirondacks, Saratoga Springs is another spa town, home to the Saratoga National Historic Park. The National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame and the elegant Canfield Casino, dating from 1870, are based here, monuments of Saratoga Springs’ gambling past. Also in Saratoga Springs is the National Museum of Dance, devoted to American dance from ballet to tap. The former battlefield of Saratoga is in Stillwater, near Saratoga Springs, and in Schuylerville is General Philip Schuyler House, burnt by the British in 1777 but rebuilt in the same year. Wilton Grant Cottage State Historic Site is where Ulysses S Grant spent the last six weeks of his life writing his memoirs. In the southeastern Adirondacks, Fort Ticonderoga was the site of major victories in the French and Indian War (the North American arm of the Seven Years' War) and American Revolution, and overlooks Lake Champlain. The burial site of John Brown, the famed abolitionist leader of the 1850 raid on the national arsenal at Harpers Ferry, is also situated here. In Saranac Lake is the cottage where Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson lived at the time of writing *The Master of Ballantrae*. In the Finger Lakes region in northwestern New York the Susan B Anthony House was home to the pioneering woman-suffrage leader and the site of her arrest for voting in 1872; the Women's-rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls focuses on the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, the assembly that launched the women's suffrage movement in the USA. Also in Seneca Falls is the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House and the National Women's Hall of Fame. Seward House in Auburn dates from 1816 and was home to abolitionist William Seward and is rich in abolitionist artefacts. William Seward and Harriet Tubman are buried in the Fort Hill Cemetery, also in Auburn. The birthplace of President Millard Fillmore is near Moravia, east of Fillmore Glen State Park. Ithaca is home to Cornell University. In Elmira, Dunn Field is the site of the first organized baseball game. Landmark Theater in Syracuse is a National Historic Landmark, originally Loew's State Theatre.

The AWA Museum of Electronic Communication in East Bloomfield, housed within the Bloomfield Academy Museum, has one of the largest collections of early communications technology, including wireless, telegraph, radio, and television. There are several Mennonite communities in Keuka Lake, Penn Yan, and Dundee.

In Buffalo, New York's second largest city, Buffalo City Hall in Niagara Square is an art deco masterpiece. The city is famous for its early skyscrapers and historic theatres.

The most outstanding natural features in New York State are Niagara Falls, including Buckhorn Island State Park on Grand Island, the last vestige of once vast marshlands and meadows that bordered the Niagara River; the Adirondacks; Montauk Point State Park on Long Island; the wetlands Rockefeller State Park in Tarrytown; Agers Falls on the Moose River; Bergen Swamp in Byron, an area of unchanged habitat dating back 125,000 years and home to several rare and endangered species; and Plattsburgh City Beach in Plattsburgh, the USA's largest freshwater beach. New York State has about 180 state parks. Niagara Falls and the St Lawrence Power Project are two of the most important hydroelectric power sources in the world.

**Culture** New York State has a rich ethnic diversity due to its influx of European immigrants, and large numbers of the population have Scottish, Irish, Polish, Italian, Scandinavian, Slavic, or French-Canadian ancestry.

There are 11 American Indian reservations in New York State, and native peoples include the Seneca Nation, the Tonawanda Band of Senecas, the Cayuga Nation, the Onondaga Nation, the Oneida Indian Nation of New York, the St Regis Mohawk Tribe (Akwesasne), the Tuscarora Nation, the Unkechauga Nation, and the Shinnecock Tribe on Long Island. Nearly all the reservations feature traditional arts and
crafts and host American Indian events and celebrations. The Iroquois Indian Museum in Howes Cave exhibits contemporary Iroquois art, traditional American Indian culture, and archaeology. The Seneca-Iroquois National Museum on Allegheny Indian Reservation in Salamanca features exhibits on the history of the Seneca Nation. The Shakowi Cultural Center of the Oneida Nation, Verona, displays a wide variety of artefacts and crafts. The Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, is home to the Eugene and Clare Thaw Collection of American Indian Art.

New York State has the oldest education system in the USA. New York's higher education institutions include the State University of New York, with centres in Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, and Stony Brook on Long Island; Cornell University and Ithaca College in Ithaca; Bard College, in Annandale-on-Hudson; Hobart and William Smith Colleges, in Geneva; Colgate University, in Hamilton; Union College, in Schenectady; Vassar College, in Poughkeepsie; Syracuse University, in Syracuse; Sarah Lawrence College, in Yonkers; the University of Rochester, in Rochester; and, in New York City, Columbia University, Barnard College, New York University, Juilliard School, Rockefeller University, Yeshiva University, Pratt Institute, Fordham University, Wagner College, St John's University, and the New School for Social Research.

While the state's museums and cultural life are centred in New York City, there are also many art museums and institutes elsewhere. Among these are the European and US fine art collection at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo; the Albany Institute of History and Art; the Everson Museum in Syracuse; the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, with work by artists of the Hudson River School, as well as American Indian art; the Frederic Remington Art Museum in Ogdensburg; the Hofstra University Museum in Hempstead; the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers; the Hyde Collection Art Museum in Glen Falls; the Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University; the Loeb Art Center at Vassar College; American Western and American Indian art at the Rockwell Museum of Western Art in Corning; the Rockwell Kent Collection at the Plattsburgh State Art Museum; and the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica, whose permanent collection includes works by Picasso, Dalí, Moore, and Burchfield. The Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University and the Corning Museum of Glass are two important decorative arts museums. The George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film is in Rochester and the Museum of the Moving Image is in Astoria. Horseheads Historical Museum in Horseheads features original drawings of 19th–20th-century political cartoonist Eugene Zimmerman and paintings by Andrew Wyeth. The Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase has exhibits of African and contemporary art.

The New York State Summer School of the Arts has nationally celebrated summer education programmes in ballet, choral, dance, jazz, media art, theatre, visual arts, and orchestral music. Commercial theatre is concentrated in New York City but there are many small theatre companies and community theatres throughout New York State, including those in Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, and Rochester. Universities and colleges play an important role in New York State’s cultural life, particularly in theatre, dance, and classical music. At Bard College, the Conductors Institute offers a unique six-week programme for conductors, and one of the country's most important music festivals, the Bard Music Festival, is held annually at Bard College and at Lincoln Center in New York City. Major chamber music festivals are the annual Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, the Skaneateles Festival, and the Windham Chamber Music Festival. The legendary Woodstock Festival was held at a farm in Bethel in 1969.

Traditional folk-style festivals in New York include the Waterford/RiverSpark Canalfest; the Harbor and
Carousel Festival in Rochester; the Peaceful Valley Bluegrass Festival in Downsville; and the French Festival in Cape Vincent in the Thousand Islands region, commemorating French Canadian heritage. Buffalo has the largest St Patrick’s Day parade in the state, outside of New York City. Traditional Arts Festival in Upstate New York (TAUNY) in Canton is devoted to showcasing regional folk arts and traditions.

New York has many prominent ski resorts and hosts a winter carnival at Saranac Lake with competitive bobsledding, ice-skating, skiing, and other winter sports. Lake Placid, in the Adirondack Mountains, hosted the winter Olympics in 1932 and 1980. Saratoga and Goshen are important horse-racing centres and there are race tracks at Canandaigua, Batavia, Vernon, Monticello, and Hamburg. Saranac Lake, First Lake, and North Creek are important boat-racing centres. Buffalo has two very large sports stadiums, Pilot Field and the Marine Midland Arena.

Recreational facilities in New York State focus mainly on its scenic outdoor spaces, where hunting, fishing, walking, and climbing are popular activities.

Government

New York’s state constitution The constitution dates from 1938, and previous constitutions date from 1777, 1821, 1846, and 1894.

Structure of state government The New York State legislature consists of a senate of 63 members and an assembly of 150 members, all elected for two-year terms. New York sends 27 representatives and two senators to the US Congress. The state has 29 electoral votes in presidential elections.

The Democratic Party has been the dominant party in the state during recent decades and the state has favoured Democrat candidates in the presidential elections. New York City, Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse are Democrat strongholds.

The governor, elected for a four-year term, is also chief of the state militia and is responsible for delivering an annual state-of-the-state message and for most appointments in state government, although the senate is also influential in this process. Democrat Andrew Cuomo took the governorship in January 2011.

New York’s highest court is the court of appeals, which has seven justices serving 14-year terms. The Supreme Court is the trial-level court of general jurisdiction, with a branch in each of the state’s 62 counties. There are 13 judicial districts. New York City has its own separate civil court and a special criminal court.

Boards govern 57 of the 62 state counties, while the five counties in New York City function independently. There are 62 cities, 932 towns, and 551 villages. Most are governed by a town board.

Economy New York is the leading commercial, financial, and distribution centre of the USA. Its economy is service-sector led, but retail and wholesale trade also play a major role. Tourism is a significant contributor to state income. Manufactured products include chemicals, industrial machinery, computer and electronic products, processed food, clothing and other textiles, and metal products. The New York City metropolitan area, including Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany-Schenectady-Troy, Utica-Rome, and Binghamton, are the main manufacturing areas.

In agriculture, the dairy industry is the main sector. Poultry, fruit, grapes, vegetables, corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay are the leading crops. Fishing remains a significant industry and forestry is also important. In mining, New York is a leading producer of salt, and cement, sand, and gravel are also
History

Early settlement The Algonquian and the Iroquoian people were the earliest inhabitants of the New York region. The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Tuscarora, and Seneca tribes later united to form the Iroquois Confederacy, also known as the Six Nations. They were farmers, hunters, and fur traders, eventually forced to leave the region after the French and Indian War (1756–63). Giovanni da Verrazzano, exploring the North American Atlantic coast for France, was the first European to visit the New York region, in 1524. French explorer Samuel de Champlain led an expedition in 1609 and discovered Lake Champlain. In the same year, the English explorer Henry Hudson sailed the Hudson River and partially explored New York’s interior.

In 1624 the Dutch West India Company established colonies in the northern Hudson Valley and at Fort Orange, later to become Albany. Dutch colonial governor Peter Minuit purchased Manhattan from the Canarsees Indians for a small sum, called it New Amsterdam, and established the first permanent colony there; the area was known collectively as New Netherland.

Dutch and English colonial period New Amsterdam quickly became an important trading post and attracted German, Swiss, Moravian, French, English, and Portuguese settlers. In 1647 the autocratic Peter Stuyvesant became governor. Although New Amsterdam was granted municipal self-government by the Dutch in 1653, Stuyvesant maintained tight control. Wars with the Algonquian tribes over land claims were sometimes bitter, but the real threat to the Dutch was posed by English colonists who had settled Long Island and then asserted their claim to the entire region. England famously based its claim on its sponsorship of Italian explorer Giovanni Caboto’s earliest voyages to North America in 1497–98. In 1664 King Charles II sent Colonel Richard Nicolls into New York Harbor with an army, and although Stuyvesant wanted to defend New Netherland, his unpopular rule and the cultural diversity of the colony meant that his subjects were neither loyal nor patriotic, and they did not want to risk bloodshed. The Dutch surrendered peacefully to the English, and Nicolls renamed both the province and its chief city New York, in honour of his patron, the Duke of York; he also gave the name of Albany to the Fort Orange colony of Beverwyck.

English rule Colonel Nicolls became governor of the colony and granted to it a limited degree of self-government. In 1683 his successor, Thomas Dongan, called a representative assembly that adopted a Charter of Liberties and Privileges and allowed for religious freedom, limited home rule, and trading rights. By this time New York had become a crucial trading centre and it was merchants who formed the political elite. In 1685 the new English king, James II, formerly the Duke of York, appointed Edmund Andros governor of New England and New York. English-style manors were established and the ruling elite grew more powerful and the distribution of wealth more disproportionate. During the 1690s, England and France fought for control of the colonies in North America, culminating in the French and Indian War. After the war, former Iroquois lands were ceded to the colony under the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, expanding the territory of the New York region and contributing to its present-day boundaries.

American Revolution An economic depression following the French and Indian War, and a series of unpopular British taxes (the Navigation Acts, Sugar and Molasses Acts, Stamp Act, and Townshend Acts) contributed to growing dissatisfaction. Loyalists, or Tories – those loyal to the British crown – were powerful in New York and rejected the propositions of the First Continental Congress in 1774, but Patriots, those advocating independence from the British crown, formed their own provincial congress as an alternative to the Loyalist assembly, and sent their own delegates to the Second
Continental Congress. When the American Revolution began in earnest with the battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775, New York rebel Patriots were quick to join in the battle. By October the governor of New York, and many Loyalists with him, had fled. The New York congress ratified the Declaration of Independence in July 1776. General George Washington moved his headquarters to New York City and began building defences within the state.

During the American Revolution many important battles were fought in New York, beginning with the capture of Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point, on Lake Champlain, and the loss of Long Island and Harlem Heights to the British, followed by British occupation of New York City. The Battle of Saratoga in October 1777 prevented Britain from taking Albany and the Hudson River, and effectively rescued New England from being cut off from the other rebelling colonies. The First Congress of the USA took place in 1789 and George Washington was sworn in as the first president of the USA in April of the same year.

Early statehood After the Revolution New York State became divided over ratification of the US Constitution. New York City served as capital of the USA from 1785 to 1790 but, as other states joined the Union, New York's divided position threatened to undermine its power within the Union, and on 26 July 1788 New York agreed to enter the Union as the 11th state. Alexander Hamilton, who had supported the Constitution, went on to lead the Federalist Party, with John Jay as governor, until the party waned at the beginning of the 19th century. The pro-states' rights Democratic-Republican Party was led by George Clinton, De Witt Clinton, Daniel D Tompkins, and Aaron Burr. Meanwhile, many of the battles of the War of 1812 took place along the border of New York with Canada, including the decisive US defeat of the British near Plattsburgh, on Lake Champlain.

Growth as a state: industry and politics As lands were claimed and the larger estates of colonial days were broken up, western and central New York attracted immigrant farmers from Europe and New York City. During the 1840s the larger cities saw an influx of Irish immigrants, who were fleeing the potato famine, and these provided the state with a large base of workers willing to work for very low wages. With a superb natural harbour and port, a cosmopolitan culture, good navigation, and many goods left over from the British occupation, New York City quickly established itself as a competitive industrial and financial centre. Commercial farming in the state also flourished, serving New York City. The construction of roads, canals, and railways and the use of natural waterways facilitated trade and export. The Erie Canal, built between 1817 and 1825, was the state’s most important waterway, linking the Great Lakes with the Hudson River and the Atlantic. The Democratic-Republican Party divided into Clintonians, led by Governor De Witt Clinton, and the Albany Regency, led by lawyer and legislator Martin Van Buren, who backed war hero Andrew Jackson in the elections of 1828. Van Buren won the New York governor's race, Jackson was elected president, and Van Buren later became the first New Yorker to be elected president of the USA, in 1836.

In New York City, the Democratic organization known as Tammany Hall appealed for support to the large numbers of new immigrants and used their votes to build itself an influential power base. In New York City, former Whigs Horace Greeley and William Seward were instrumental in forming the antislavery Republican Party.

Civil War New York supported the Union cause in the American Civil War (1861–65), although businessmen feared commercial disruption and immigrants feared a rise in freed slaves as rival cheap labour. Many New York soldiers died in the Battle of Bull Run in July 1861.
The main outcome of the Civil War for New York, however, was a massive boom in commerce and in agriculture. A second major wave of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe arrived, and many of them passed through Ellis Island. New York's population grew rapidly and urbanization and industrialization spread. Steel, film processing, the garment industry, construction, and electrification became the leading growth industries. Unions and union leaders, such as Samuel Gompers, led a progressive period and the 1911 fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York City, which killed 146 women trapped in the factory, became a national symbol for workers' exploitation and vulnerability.

20th century The powerful and often corrupt control over New York politics by Tammany Hall was diminished by a succession of progressive state governors, including Alfred E Smith and Franklin D Roosevelt; its power declined further during the reform administrations of New York City mayors Fiorello La Guardia (mayor from 1933 to 1945) and John Lindsay (mayor from 1966 to 1973). In New York City, Harlem grew into a cultural hub for African Americans. During the 1930s two more parties were founded in New York: the American Labor Party and the Liberal Party, later replaced by the Conservative Party.

The opening of the St Lawrence Seaway in 1959 allowed ocean-going vessels of the Atlantic to reach New York ports on the Great Lakes via the St Lawrence River. During the later 1950s, 1960s, and until 1973, Nelson A Rockefeller was governor and instituted an increased level of state social services, expanded the state university system, and adopted a state lottery.

In the 1960s New York suffered race riots, and in the 1970s ‘Rustbelt’ years, the inner cities of New York State declined as manufacturing and heavy industry moved out or disappeared altogether. Urban ghettos developed, with high levels of crime, unemployment, and drug abuse. In 1975, New York's city government needed a federal loan and debt restructuring to avoid bankruptcy. Crime and economic problems continued in the 1980s. The public sector and unions were greatly eroded during this period and the private sector became increasingly cut-throat and competitive. Financial crises, social welfare, and the state's economy became the pressing issues for the Democrat governor Mario Cuomo, 1983–94, and Republican governor George Pataki, 1995–2006.

From the 1980s Wall Street in New York City was reborn as the world's financial centre and, in the 1990s, helped by the city police's new ‘zero tolerance’ approach to minor crimes and anti-social activities, crime rates began to fall substantially. The growing economy and improved order brought a reverse to the outflow of population from the city.

21st century On 11 September 2001 New York City was the site of the worst terrorist outrage on US soil when nearly 3,000 people were killed when Islamic extremists flew two hijacked commercial aeroplanes into the World Trade Center, causing the collapse of its Twin Towers. The rescue effort by firefighters, police, and volunteers captured the nation's attention. The city rebounded quickly from this disaster and the One World Trade Center, colloquially known as the ‘Freedom Tower’ and the tallest building in the Western hemisphere, has since been built on the site.

In October 2012 New York suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Sandy.

Famous peoplesport Lou Gehrig (1903–1941), baseball player; Vince Lombardi (1913–1970), football coach; Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (1947– ), basketball player; Michael Jordan (1963– ), basketball player

the arts Washington Irving (1783–1859), short-story writer; Herman Melville (1819–1891), author; Walt Whitman (1819–1892), poet; Henry James (1843–1916), author; Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933),

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science George Pullman (1831–1897), engineer; George Westinghouse (1846–1914), inventor; George Eastman (1854–1932), inventor; Jonas Salk (1914–1995), physician; Gertrude Belle Elion (1918–1999), biochemist

society and education John Jay (1745–1829), jurist; Julia Ward Howe (1819–1910), social reformer; Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962) social worker and First Lady

economics Leland Stanford (1824–1893), railroad developer; Jay Gould (1836–1892), financier; John D Rockefeller (1839–1937), industrialist; Frank Winfield Woolworth (1852–1919), entrepreneur

politics and law Martin Van Buren (1782–1862), 8th president of the USA; Millard Fillmore (1800–1874), 13th president of the USA; Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919), 26th president of the USA; Franklin D Roosevelt (1882–1945), 32nd president of the USA; Colin Powell (1937– ), general.

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